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Illusion

THE MAGAZINE FOR CROSSDRESSERS, DRAG QUEENS & ADMIRERS

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TRANSSEXUALS

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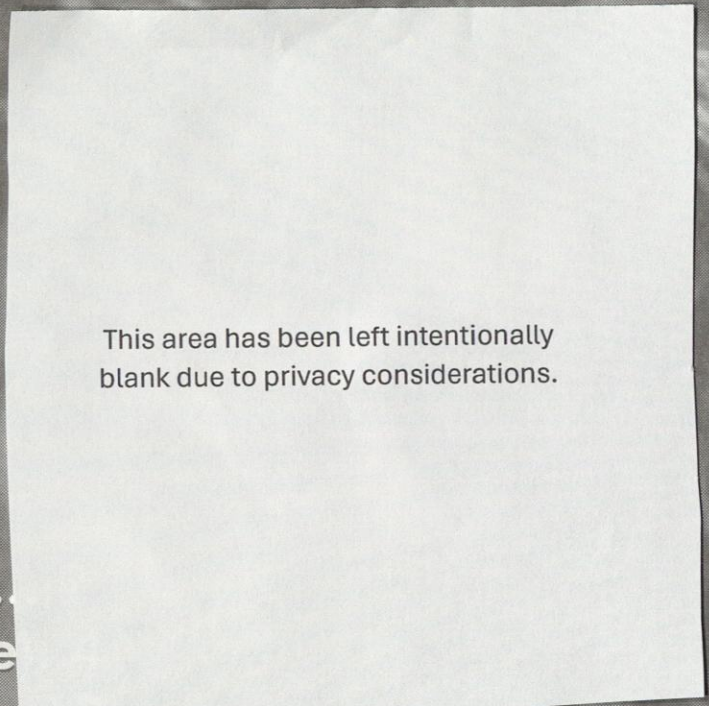


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ILLUSION MAGAZINE. 6802 OGDEN ROAD SE. CALGARY, AB CANADA T2C 1B4. TELEPHONE (403)236-7072. FAX (403)275-6443.
EDITOR: Barbie Associate Editor: Christine. Art Direction & Production: S/M Design,

Subject contained within act as a vehicle to educate and understand between the various fetishes. The mention, appearance or likeness or any person or organization in articles or advertising in Illusion Magazine is not to be taken as an identification of the sexual, social or political orientation of such persons. Illusion Magazine does not assume responsibility for unsolicited submissions although they are always welcome. Editorial contents is held by Illusion Magazine. Reproduction in whole or part is forbidden unless with the express permission in writing from the publishers. Illusion does not assume responsibility for the quality of goods or services advertised in this magazine, but welcomes comments from anyone dealing with any of the companies for future publication. Illusion Magazine condones only safe, sane, consensual and legal fantasy-fetish activities between adults over 18. Persons under 18 are not to view or possess this publication.

FROM THE EDITOR BLAH BLAH BLAH



Summer seems like it has moved on and Fall is closing in on us. Yes, we could get a warm September, but those hot July evenings are definitely a memory at this point.

In the darker, cooler and cozier Fall months we tend to see more people coming out of their various closets. With Halloween around the corner, its a fabulous time to ride the wave of the National Crossdressers holiday time. We have already seen new faces in the shop that are looking for that perfect Feminine outfit for Halloween. Our only hope is that they get the confidence to stay out of the closet and join a support group somewhere close to home. Obviously if you are in our Alberta area.. then we welcome you to Illusions.

Last Illusions meeting was quite fun, various conversations came up as always.... and the subject of fetish came up. In our Illusion magazine, we have been expanding our horizons to include more people. As you welcome in more people you find that even though there are various elements of fetish in all of our lives..they are all laced together by some common threads. The gals that were there that night in particular were linked by the crossdressing... but no two shared the same emotions about what it was that worked for them. One was very much a shoe person... I could fall into that category as well.... one other was very much a lingerie fancier.... another was half dressed in female attire and half dressed in male

attire as the interest was more towards the garments then having a female persona.. while another was a different girl altogether different from his male self. ALL various fetishes.

I think that some folk may have interpreted the word fetish with caution. I see it that Fetish is a way to label all sorts of things that bring us pleasure. That's a good thing folks!

I think that we would have a very hard time pinholing our magazine to fit only one area of fetish. How boring! Let's learn about all the angles that drive people to an emotional level that either keeps them happy, motivated, and fulfilled. Of course in life its not always that rosy, there are the downsides to things that we feel we need. Usually, its a lack of involvement or acceptance or understanding from our peers, wives or friends. Understandably... as things propel you, it doesn't apply to them.

That's another big ball of wax, and one not easily solved... but the Wife situation for some can be a big stumbling block. Recently a couple of members from Illusions got Caught and thankfully both situations turned out not so bad. Its not easy living life with few secret passions.

Anyway, if you are reading this for the first time.. we welcome you to Illusion. It is a magazine for everyone. We would love it if you have any articles or stories to share, just mail them to us.

The Bizarre Ball is coming up again and its a great time to dust off those thigh high boots and that cute little leather outfit and party. This OCTOBER 17, we will be hosting the Ball at Arena- Detour in Calgary. We have tickets ready and if you require any further information.. feel free to call us. We look forward to seeing you there!

Darbie

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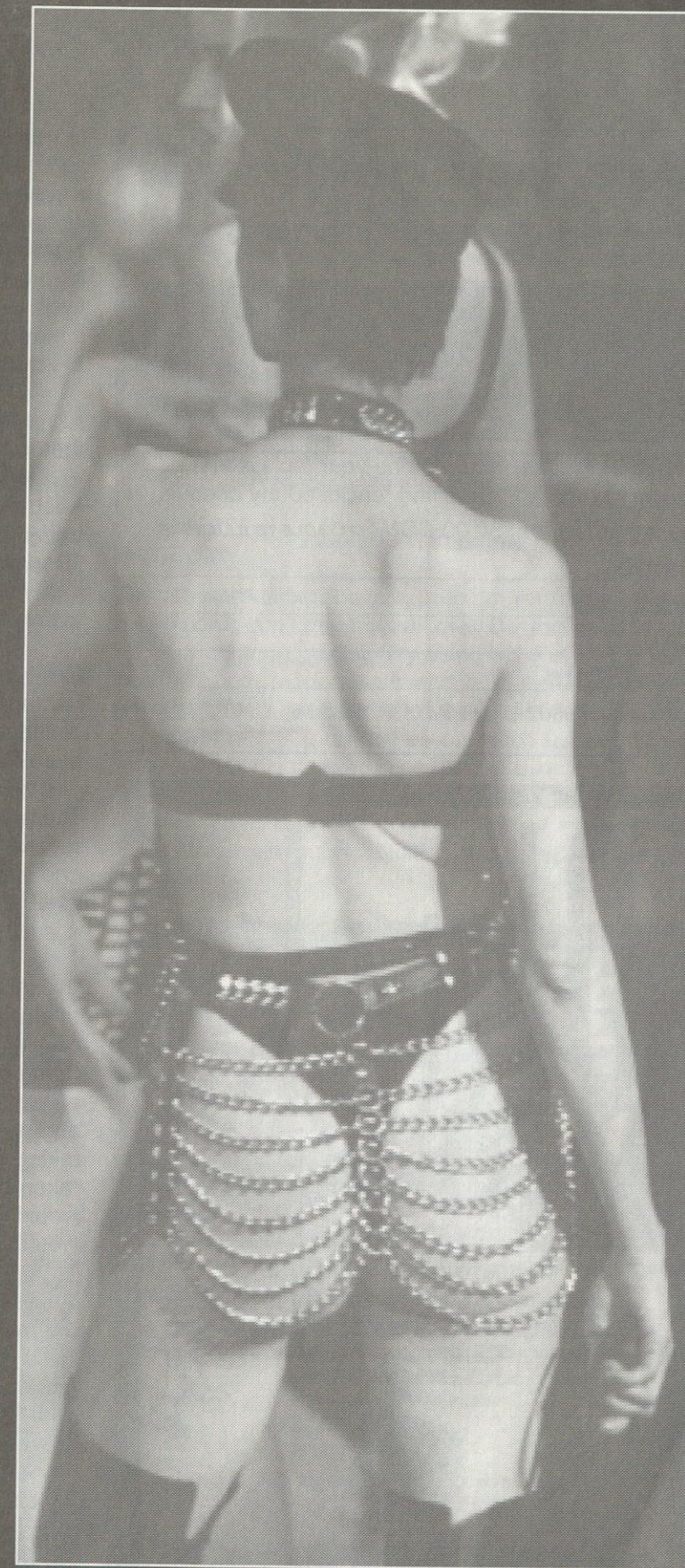
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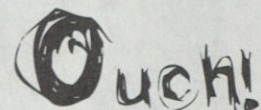
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FROM THE EDITOR DEAR READER

I guess this is the time to welcome everyone back to the routine of life...summer holiday season is over and now we all get back to "NORMAL". What an interesting word...NORMAL...everyone has a very different view of what that is! Certainly my view of normal is substantially different than say...religious right-wing conservatives....not saying I'm not religious of course. Be that as it may, I hope part of your "NORMAL" times will include bi-weekly visits to Illusions Club this fall and winter.

We are continuing with our approach of a different theme for each magazine and this magazine will have a "Transsexual" flavour. Our covergirl is a TS from Australia, Steffi, complete with a short letter from her in our letters section; look for an article from a "Transman", which we hope will be an on going column; and yours truly will attempt to give you an insight into my own personal journey from male to female.

Our intentions in terms of varying themes has been to perhaps present views and subjects that would open dialogue between our readers. Perhaps even educate people on various lifestyles that you the reader wouldn't know or come in contact with. We certainly have succeeded, judging by the varying responses we have received. We have offended some, enlightened some and hopefully even changed a few peoples perceptions of what "NORMAL" life is...there's that interesting word again.

"Normal" people might go from finding this magazine offensive to very informative, so it is not surprising that people in and around the transgender world might go from one side of the spectrum to the other in their view of this magazine. I personally think that being topical and perhaps even controversial is more important than taking the easy non-confrontational road. Had we not taken a chance and stepped into the unknown, there wouldn't be an "Illusions Club" and more importantly I wouldn't be who I am today.

Remember, just because we talk about something in the magazine it doesn't mean you'll be confronted with that when you go to the "Illusions Club" as the premise for the club has remained unchanged since its inception. We still maintain a friendly, safe atmosphere for the transgendered of any gender or sexual persuasion to meet in a non-judgmental and non-sexual area.

I'll close this by using a saying that I've penned many times in the past: "YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ACTIVIST...YOU JUST NEED TO BE ACTIVE"! With that in mind, come out and support your club and any community events that appeal to you.

MAKE UP TIPS

Rachel

I know that all us girls are always looking for ways to improve our appearance. It is really amazing how many places we can find some good pointers. Here are some that I have pulled together for your consideration. I won't guarantee that they'll make you look gorgeous, but I hope you will find one or two of these helpful.

Eyebrows:

Now most of us seem to have hairier brows than most genetic women we know. It can sometimes be a problem to minimize those bushy brows. If you are one of those with bushy brows, consider plucking the brows just a bit to give them a slightly more feminine appearance. If you are afraid that someone would notice, let me tell you that I have been plucking my brows for quite a while now and no one has said a thing. Even my mother hasn't noticed. If the thought of plucking sounds too painful, consider shaving your brows. This also works, but the effect doesn't last as long.

Another trick is to apply foundation into the eyebrow hairs. Use a sponge to really work the foundation into the hairs. This lightens and hides some of the brow. Then use an eyebrow pencil to darken only a thinner portion of the brows, while lengthening them at the same time. Remember that the best thing to do is practice. In this way, the results will look better with time.

Nose:

Do you feel that your nose is too big? Lightly apply a brown blush (e.g. Revlon's Toast of New York) to both sides of your nose. Don't apply too much or you'll look like your nose is dirty (and that really isn't very ladylike).

Shaving:

If you can never seem to shave close enough, try this. Soften your beard by either showering or by washing your face and keeping it warm and wet for several minutes. Then apply an ice compress to your beard area. This will cause blood flow to decrease, making your skin effectively thinner. It will also cause your skin to tighten and the muscles that make your hairs stand on end to contract. This will cause your hairs to poke out much further than they would have if you simply just pulled your skin taut. When your skin warms up again, the hairs will recede back into their follicles.

Makeup Removal:

Do you sometimes have a problem removing all your make up or don't quite get all of it! Do you need to take off your makeup quickly. Try using baby oil. Pour some baby oil onto a face cloth and hold the cloth against your face for a moment to let the oil do it's work. You'll find that the make up comes off much faster this way and you don't need to rub as hard to take it off.

There you have the first installment of makeup tips. We'll have many more titillating tips for you in the next issue.

BIZARRE BALL '97

DETAILS ON PAGE 3

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Transsexual

TRANSSEXUALISM

Christine

What is a Transsexual? Easy answer is, "Someone who suffers from a gender dis-ease or Transsexualism".

What is Transsexualism? Not so easy to answer, even if you have gone through the transsexual process. How do you explain a feeling to someone? It is like trying to explain color to someone who has been blind from birth.

The feeling is much more than a dis-ease with your gender, you know from an early age that something isn't right. However at that age you really have no idea of gender, you just know that what other children and adults expect you to do and how you should act isn't what you like to do. People treat you rough and tumble or soft and sweet depending on their perception of your gender. You can't understand why they aren't treating you the right way, which is your perception of you. You see other children being treated the right way, so, how come you aren't? How come every time you act the way you feel you are scolded for it or you hear people say that you'll grow out of it. It's only a phase you're going through. You know this isn't a phase but how can you possibly explain this dis-ease to others they have no idea what you are talking about, they look at you as if you are crazy.

As you grow older some realize that life is easier if you hide away your dis-ease and at least pretend to be how the world expects you to be. This doesn't do anything for your situation but it makes it slightly easier for the

world to cope with you. On the other hand there are some that just barrel on and force the issues with an apparent to hell with the consequences attitude. The latter are referred to as Primary Transsexuals by the medical community and the first category mentioned are referred to as Secondary Transsexuals, that is when they finally get to the point of dealing with their dis-ease. In my mind there is no right way or wrong way to deal with this dis-ease. Some have the opportunity to resolve things early in their life while others resolve

their issues later.

I personally fall into the category of Secondary Transsexual. That is to say that I spent a large portion of my life in my birth gender of which, I have always thought of as being wrong! Yes folks I am a post-operative male to female transsexual. Some say that once you have gone through the mental analysis, hormone treatments, the real life test and the surgery you are no longer a transsexual...You are a woman or a man depending on whether you were a male to female or female to male. I am not going to get into that kettle of fish as I believe it doesn't matter what the terminology as long as the individual is happy.

To quickly touch on some of the clinical, treatment guidelines have been established and are generally adhered to by most reputable medical caregivers. Mental analysis is part of the process and must be undertaken in order to proceed to hormonal treatment, with usually a minimum ninety days association with a psychological practitioner. Then you are referred to a medical doctor who establishes your bodies ability to safely go through the rigors of hormone treatment and usually hormonal treatment will be a part of the rest of your life. You have to also do the "Real Life Test", which means you must live in the gender of choice constantly for a period of time to accustom yourself to your desired life role. Hopefully by this time you have nearly finished or have finished electrolysis (M to F) or the testosterone has started to kick in and

male pattern hair growth has started and some of your feminine features are starting to dissipate (F to M). During this time you have done what ever minor surgical changes, if any, that you deem necessary. Hopefully you have started on your career or at least you have some form of employment happening because as the chinese say "No money, No life!" Sometime along the way you start to change your paper trail with name changes, drivers license and credit card changes, etc. In order to change the gender boxes however, you must

have had the surgery and letters from the surgeon to prove it! After a period of time, that some times feels like forever, you are deemed ready by you and your caregivers to go on to the final clinical step which is gender re-assignment surgery. At this time I would like to mention that not all Transsexuals go to surgery and the reasons are as varied as the individuals that are Transsexuals. Each person must make the choice that is right for them and for me it was surgery.

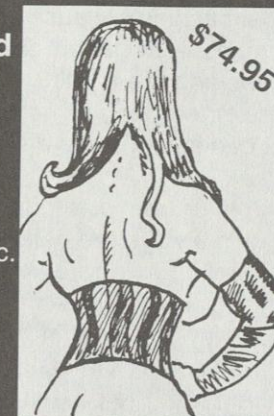
Yes folks I've heard it all..... Early on it was whispers and sometimes loud voices saying, "Who is he trying to fool?", "Looks like a man in a dress", "Mommy, why is that man wearing a dress?", "Don't go in there lady there is a man in your washroom", "Must be a god damn faggot!", well you probably get the idea. It is amazing to me that you are immediately assumed to be gay, when in fact the last thing a gay male wants is someone who is going through the process to become female. A gay male wants another male! Some said, "I sure admire your strength", "You sure are Brave", others said, "Must be crazy, why would anyone in their right mind want to go from being a male with better jobs, better pay, being the top of the gender totem pole to being female and obviously to being a second class citizen!" Life wasn't exactly a bowl of cherries to say the least.

In my case most of my family decided to have nothing to do with me after I tried to explain to them my life decision. I spent a great deal of time composing an explanatory letter, purchasing informative books to give them explaining my dis-ease and meeting with some of them to explain my situation in person. I continued with correspondence through the mail with them as they felt it was too painful to see me in person. Sometimes people are more concerned over their own discomfort, possible potential for embarrassment or concern over what their friends might think of them, to accept that you have been hurting over this dis-ease for your entire life. You know that if you had a dis-ease like a congenital heart defect that they would go into the poor house if need be to get you cured. My mother commented to me after I had my name legally changed that she never named her son Christine and that she never had a daughter of that name either. My one brother was the only sibling that at least had the courtesy to send me a letter stating that he had no desire to see me during or after my transition and that he would prefer to remember me as the brother he had/has. I was told that I was causing them too much pain and it would be better if I had nothing to do with them. In one fell swoop I had two sisters, three brothers and a mother cut from my life. There is very little you can say to some people that would even make sense enough for them to even want to try to understand. My son has stuck by me and when I got the courage to tell my father, who by the way lives some distance from me, about all this he has accepted

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Transsexual - Transsexualism...continued from page 7
my life choice as well. I continue to tell people that whatever their decisions in life are on any particular subject it always has its costs, in one way or another.

As time progresses you become more at ease with yourself, which you usually project and you are perceived as being a happier person than you were before. For some the progress is marred by societies lack of understanding because once again you may not fit in to societies expectation of what your gender should be. Maybe you are too tall, not pretty enough or too pretty, voice is too deep or not deep enough, etc., etc.,..... as you can see this can also become a societal dis-ease.

No matter how comfortable you become with yourself there is always the person or the fear of a person seeing through to where you once were and broadcasting it to the world. For some it doesn't matter as they live their "New Life" out in the open for all to accept or not as they see fit. Others however, have dropped all connection with the past and have developed a life based on some fact and a lot of fiction and to a point live in fear of discovery. Take for example, someone who has developed a relationship with someone, maybe have married and forgot to tell their spouse that they were once the other gender! Could cause just a little grief I would hazard! If you are a person who is open about your life and your new partner hasn't or doesn't know about your background, when is a good time to tell them? What will be their reaction? If they turn out to be okay about it, will their family? Do you need to tell them? How about friends or partners friends, how will they accept you? So as you can see, even as comfortable as you may be with yourself there is no telling how the rest of the world will take you!

You really have to decide that no matter how people take you, you have to be happy with you and the life decisions you have made. You have good and bad days, your personal expectations, dreams, heartaches and day to day life could be experienced by anyone. You really are not much different than the rest of the inhabitants of the world and would like to be treated as such. What you have done though, is you have dared

to challenge the bi-polar structure of gender and brought up a subject that can for some reason unbalance the most balanced person!

When you challenge a belief that has been constant for so long a period of time you have to be prepared for the best and the worst of people. I personally hope that as we the inhabitants of this planet age, we don't just get older...my hope is that we get smarter. With this intellect I hope comes an understanding that although each of us has our own unique differences, our own needs, wants and desires and our own way of expressing ourselves, that we really need to be open-minded enough to accept the choices of others as being right for that individual.

There are many terms in the transgendered community, but in this issue we are going to try and deal with some of the terminology that relates more specifically to transsexuals.

soc.support.transgendered terminology

What are all these strange words and abbreviations?

transsexual, TS

One for whom the sex assigned at birth is incorrect; some take hormones, some will have surgery to correct the genitals. "Preop" or preoperative transsexual refers to one who has not had SRS (q.v.); "postop" or postoperative to one who has. "Non-op" transsexuals have not had SRS, and have accepted that for a variety of reasons (including health-related, financial, relationships, or other things) they will not be having SRS in this lifetime.

Gender dysphoria

This is a clinical term for transgenderism, and it means "gender confusion." Within the community, it is sometimes stated as gender euphoria or gender-gifted. We're not confused; we just have more options. Gender identity disorder is the currently favored diagnostic terminology.

F2M

Female to male. This is typically seen only in reference to transsexuals, as most other transgendered behaviour is socially tolerated in genetic females.

M2F

Male to Female a direction of transition or cross-dressing.

Transition

This is the process of changing gender role, and also the time period in which the change occurs. the time period starts, more or less, with the decision to change gender, and ends with surgery. The term is also used in the sense of an event, usually when a person begins working in the new gender role.

Full-time

Cross- living full-time, in an adopted gender role, professionally, socially, and privately. These usually do not change all at once; typically, private and social living in the new role provides a practice period for the more critical-and risky-change in professional role. A pre-requisite for surgery, is may be referred to as the real-life test (RLT).

Harry S. Benjamin - Standards of Care

The document that outlines the medical and psychiatric standards for working with transsexuals. Major points include (1) three months of therapy before being recommended for hormones; (2) one year of hormone therapy before surgery; (3) one year of cross-living before surgery; and (4) two psychiatric or psychotherapist's evaluations recommending surgery, one of whom must be a psychiatrist, and one of whom must have had an extended therapeutic relationship with the client.

Hormones

Estrogen and progesterone (female sex hormones) for the M2F transsexual, and testosterone (male sex hormone) for the F2M transsexual. This is a major topic on its own, but as a quick reference, there are a few points to mention. First, these are powerful drugs, and should only be used with medical supervision. This supervision is available for transsexuals who work within the framework of the Standards of Care. Major effects of hormones (breasts for M2F; lower voice, and facial and body hair for F2M) are not reversible. Significant side effects of long-term usage include sterility, and impotence for genetic males. Hormone therapy is necessary for transition, but starting hormones is a decision that must not be made lightly.

Cosmetic surgery

Any other surgery needed to enhance appearance in

...continued on page 14

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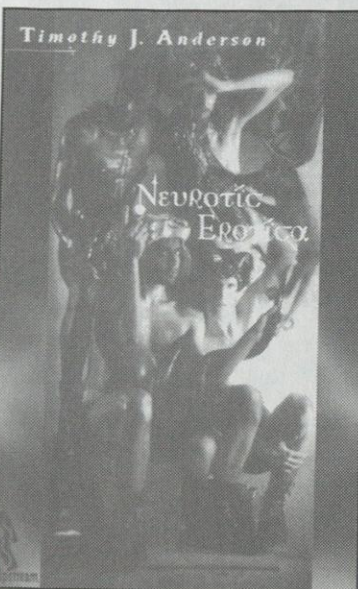
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NEUROTIC EROTICA

Timothy J. Anderson
Slipstream, 1996

Neurotic erotica, is poetry necessarily an expression of personal truth? Or can it be a series of fictions and fantasies in search of a greater truth? In this provocative examination of human sexual behaviour, award-winning playwright Timothy J. Anderson invites readers to share a dialogue about what is normal and what is neurotic in the ways humans express their sexuality.

You will find in these pages an unsettling catalogue of hidden erotic desires. If this book works for you, you will emerge shaken, disturbed and changed.

What happens when the code of silence and shame is broken by the poet who publicly articulates the "unspeakable" stories of human sexual and erotic experiences?

Robyn Mott, PhD (from the foreword)

Someone who understands rhythm at an organic level recognizes the fundamental unit of both poetry and desire.

the author from

"Why My Mother Won't Like This Book"

SEX CHANGES The Politics of Transgenderism

Pat Califia
Cleis Press, 1997

Pat Califia's writings on sexuality, pornography, censorship, and S/M have earned her the reputation of a fearless defender of sexual rights of everyone - and a fearless intellectual adversary. Sex Changes: The Politics of Transgenderism is Califia's meticulously researched book based on an astute reading of the available literature and in-depth interviews with gender transgressors

who "opened their live, minds, hearts, and bedrooms to the gaze of strangers..."

Writing about both male-to-female and female-to-male transsexuals, Califia examines the lives of early transgender pioneers like Christine Jorgenson, Jan Morris, Renee Richards and Mark Rees, contemporary transgender activists like Leslie Feinberg and Kate Borstein, and partners of transgendered people like Minnie Bruce Pratt.

Califia scrutinizes feminists resistance to transsexuals occupying women's space, the Christian Right's backlash against transsexuals, and the appropriation of the berdache and other differently-gendered by gay historians to prove the universal existence of homosexuality. Finally, Sex changes explores the future of gender.

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The Society Page

What's happening at Illusions Social Club

OK, OK I screwed up! The dates announced for the month of August were wrong. Our usual order is the second Saturday of the month and the last Friday, but this time it fell as every second week from the last meeting. This pulled everything out of order and I apologize for any inconvenience you may have had in attending Illusions functions.

The problem is sorted though, as September meetings will fall as normal and they promise to be the start of an excellent fall schedule.

So by now the Girls of Summer event has passed, though a report of the party will not make this issue. Expect a full run-down and photos in the November/December issue.

You may ask why the Girls of Summer is being held later this year. Normally the event is held around the last weekend of August, but because we don't want to pull people away from Edmonton's Coronation Ball, we moved the event after the September long-weekend so that everyone could attend. Consider this a last chance for summer fun, and somewhere to wear those summer clothes that will have to go back into the closet soon.

In July I asked for volunteers to help in painting the Illusions room and entrance. The response has been tremendous. There are over half a dozen of us (so far) who want to improve our space. Now, I did say we could do the job in August, but because of this and that I would like to take on the job in later September. We now have the paint, tools and painters so if you would like to join our merry band please let me, Christine or Barbie know I will call you with

details.

At our first meeting of August, we intended to celebrate the farewell of Illusions members who were leaving us. Their employer: The Canadian Armed Forces, was moving to Edmonton and this would be an opportunity to say goodbye and make a wish to see our friends again soon. Unfortunately we had no attendees from the forces at the party, perhaps they were keeping the peace in war-torn lands'. We offer best wishes to our Forces friends and we hope to see them again soon.

We are still looking for an Illusions librarian. A pile of sister-club newsletters is growing and need a place to be filed. We have also obtained a red ink stamper so that all our magazines and books can be identified. In the past year we have lost dozens of items and it is hoped that the stamp will help remind borrowers that the article should be returned to Illusions.

Again, please let me, Christine or Barbie know if you are interested in helping.

At our last meeting in July we bid farewell to Princess Christina, she is heading stateside for her career. Christina's cheery presence will be dearly missed at Illusions, we hope she returns for a visit. We are grateful for her organizing this spring's Mardi Gras party and in donating the new coffee maker.

**SUBMISSION
DEADLINE
FOR NEXT ISSUE:
OCTOBER 15**

Transmen

When people hear the word "transsexual", what usually comes to mind are people like Renee Richards, Jan Morrison, and Christine Jorgensen. For years the press has been bombarded with stories of men who become women; on the other hand, who in the general public has heard of James Green, Lou Sullivan or Loren Cameron? According to some medical literature, female-to-male transsexuals (also known as ftm's or transmen) are exceedingly rare. Since I moved to southern Alberta three months ago, I have already met four of my kind.

Regardless of the public's perception, we *do* exist. Each of us has spent our lives misunderstood, misplaced, and at times, misused. So when we get together with our fellow transmen, it is as though we are strangers in a strange land finally gathered in a place where we speak a common tongue.

Although we regularly meet to talk, offer information, and support to our brothers, we know there are many others out there, whether they are transsexuals, significant others of transmen, parents of ftm's, or any other of the wide range of people involved with us, who want to share our world.

A support group has been initiated in the Calgary region. We call ourselves "STED" and strive toward the ideals of support, truth, education, and dignity. Our activities include regular meetings for coffee, going to movies, or just talking. Anyone interested in joining us may contact us via **Illusions Social Club** at (403) 236-7072.

Stay tuned for our web page!
Also . . . in the next issue: "An Interview with a Transman".

IN THE NEWS

Over the last few months, there have been a few interesting news bits about transgenderism that I thought you might want to know about. Without further fanfare, here they are! - Christine

TV VIDEO

Iowa City - The city is producing a video to help businesses interact with transsexual and crossdressing employees. City officials say the video - to be completed this August for an estimated \$1450. - is designed to help local businesses comply with a city ordinance that offers protection from discrimination.

(The Advocate - June 24/97)

GENDER IS NOT AN ISSUE

Chalk one up for transsexual visibility @ the White House. When Jewelia Margueritta Cameroon learned in March that she was part of a 49 member team at the Occupation Safety & Health Administration to receive a Hammer Award from Vice President Al Gore's National Performance Review Board for improving government efficiency, she composed an unusual thank you letter to the Vice President. "Your prestigious award is particularly important to me because it affirms that I, a transgendered woman, am regarded by you as a valuable person," wrote Cameroon, Who was known as Richard Green while earning honours at OSHA. Although Cameroon wanted to meet with Gore personally, White House staff begged off, reasoning that her gender activism was irrelevant to her job performance. But the OSHA staffer is still thrilled. "It is important," she wrote, "for others to see we are capable persons who can make valuable contributions."

(The Advocate - May 13/97)

P.S. Jewelia spent the summer working here in Alberta and has even showed up at one of our socials!

ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION

The Delwin Vriend case is currently before the Supreme Court of Canada. For those of you who do not know, he was a college teacher here in Alberta, who was fired for being gay. The Alberta Bar Association is expecting the Supreme Court of Canada to decide in Delwin Vriend's favour. This will mean that the provincial government will have to rewrite it's human rights laws. In anticipation of the decision, the Alberta Bar Association is preparing a new draft for the government's consideration.

Helping them out on transgendered issues, past member Roxanne.

THE MAIL YOUR LETTERS

How are you both, well I hope. Christine, I hope you're fully recovered from the operation. I gather from the last editorial you wrote that you've not lost any of your fire, I'm very pleased. Barbie doesn't seem to be losing any of her fire either, good for you too! The community needs people like yourselves to remind us of important issues and not take the easy road.

I'm very impressed with the new format and content of the magazine. I must congratulate you on what must be alot of hard work and it is evident that the big production is worthwhile.

I have moved into a place of my own, sure affords me more freedom. My family are all clued in to my direction and lifestyle but unfortunately that doesn't make the transition any easier on them. I've been on hormones and doing electrolysis for just under a year and I'm very happy with my improvement. I'm also seeing a doctor who has TS experience which helps with the understanding of life. Life is very good for me...tough decisions, right direction.

I'm hoping to come to Canada in about a year and a half but we all know alot can happen between now and then. If you ever get to the "Land of OZ" please get in touch with me. I have nothing but praise for you girls and your efforts since I discovered the magazine roughly 3 years ago.

Neffi #372 (Cover girl)

Hi! Well here I am in beautiful, sunny Moose Jaw: it's so nice to be back in "Western Canada". Now I'm only 700 kms. from Calgary, so I'll be able to take in some of the upcoming socials. Yah-hoo! I hope all is well with you and that life is being good.

I had a very pleasant trip from New Brunswick to Saskatchewan. Eight days travelling with some of the trip "En Femme"! It was such a rush.

I've met quite a few of the girls from Regina since my arrival. They are such a sweet bunch and they have made me feel right at home. It's enough to give a girl all sorts ao warm fuzzies, ahhh!

Ursula #041

Just picked up issue 6, vol 7 of Illusion. The magazine is great. I am totally infatuated by Eisha the cover girl.

Doug

Have you ever wanted to talk to someone about Your need to Crossdress?

Have you tried talking to a randomly picked professional and heard, "Well, I don't know much about this subject, but we can learn together!"

Do you want knowledgeable information on Crossdressing, Crossliving or Transsexualism?

If any of the above questions can be answered by yes, call

Gender Consulting Services

Talk with someone who has gone through the transsexual process and is quite happy with the outcome.

We are very knowledgeable on crossdressing issues and can direct you to professional care givers who are experienced with gender issues.

We listen to your concerns, help you acquire valuable resource material and help you network with Transgender organizations in your area should you desire.

At a fraction of the cost of others, we supply you with knowledgeable information that has been amassed through real life experiences; from the formation and operation of one of Canada's premier crossdressing organizations, and operating a gender positive store, to researching the works of other gender positive workers and simply living the life of a "Gender-Gifted" person.

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Illusion Magazine/13



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FREE... lots of exciting categories
and options, find whatever you are
looking for.

STYLING: PAMELA HACKWELL PHOTOGRAPHY: JOHN VAN DER SCHILDEN

GIRLS UP NORTH SOCIAL UPDATE

Well girls, it has been another crazy and fun time up here in the city with the vacant dome (Our legislature building for those of you wondering!). It's amazing how many doors are opened for you when you become an Empress. Although I must add that no has actually opened any physical doors for me yet. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

The Friday after the birthday party was the start of Pride Week in Edmonton. There was an event at the Citadel Theatre called the Loud & Proud festival. The birthday party still fresh in my mind, I decided to go to the event dressed to the nines. Since there were also regular events going on at the Citadel, I ended up turning a few heads! Ah, the crosses that one must bear. The highlight of the evening was a performance by Chris Peterson, a female impersonator, that was terrific. His repertoire included Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Liza Minelli, Dolly Parton and many others. The following afternoon, I took part in my first Pride Parade. There was a steady and at times heavy rain that afternoon. Despite having raincoat and umbrella, I still ended up wet. I almost expected to be on the local news that night because the cameraman spent a lot of time with the camera running and pointed in my direction. When I watched the coverage of the Pride Parade, I was sort of disappointed to see that I did not see myself on the news.

The next major do I attended as Empress VII was the AGRA Rodeo at the end of June. Wow! What a weekend! The weather Friday night was less than ideal but that did not diminish our spirits (neither metaphysical or liquid form) When the winds and rain got to be too much, many of us clambered into Correen's Extended Cab truck. It certainly turned out to be an unusual, but warm and cosy party place. The next morning I got to do the introductory walk, along with all the other groups in attendance. in front of the grandstand. I never imagined that Rachel would walk, in high heels, through an outdoor area (gingerly stepping around horse paddies) to a wild and enthusiastic audience. (OK, OK, there actually was a small contingent of very vocal friends from Edmonton in the audience). During the afternoon, we set up what turned out to be a very popular shooter bar. Brenda, Michelle and others manned the post and dispensed dizzying numbers of shooters. Then there was our barbecue. Michelle was an awesome chef that evening (Of course, the booze being consumed had nothing to do with that.).

Transsexual - Transsexualism...continued from page 9

the new gender role. Frequent M2F choices include liposuction, rhinoplasty, trachea shave, and breast implants.

Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS)

The most common term for surgery which changes physiological gender. It is sometimes referred to as corrective surgery, reconciliation surgery, or simply surgery. F2M transsexuals have top surgery (double radical mastectomy) and bottom surgery (hysterectomy and reconstructive surgery).

New woman

A post-op M2F transsexual, legally certified to be a woman. After surgery, the doctor gives the new woman legal papers which can be used to change gender on documents such as birth certificates and drivers licenses. A post-op F2M transsexual, of course, is a new man.

She, her, and hers

The correct pronouns for referring to any M2F transgendered person. These are always appropriate when the person is presenting as female, and are usually the safe bet when discussion gender issues related to that person.

A post-operative transsexual, who is still married to the same woman she married as a male, tells of an incident in which her daughter called from another room for help with her homework. Before she could reply, her wife called back, "Don't bother Daddy; she's doing her nails."

He, him, and his

The correct pronouns for referring to any F2M transsexual, or for a F2M cross-dresser who is presenting as male. The same rules of appropriate choice of pronouns applies as for M2F transgendered people.

How much do all these labels matter? Not a lot, really. There's no right or wrong way to be transgendered; either you are or you aren't and that's about it. Besides that, there isn't a label to fit each and every person; some fit more than one, and some fit none at all. And people change.

Visit our website at <http://www.lava.net/~dewilson>
Diane Wilson

Websites

Transexual Menace International
<http://www.apocalypse.org/pub/tmenace/>

EVENTS CALENDAR CANADA & INT'L

ILLUSIONS CALGARY

September 13
Welcome Back - Summer is over but cool, long nights make it easier to come out and crossdress.

September 26
Topic Night - Guest Speaker TBA

October 11
Dressing For Pleasure
A return of a favorite party. Dress your fantasy. Don't be shy, we all will!

October 31
Halloween (Halloqueen)
Your first stop and perhaps your only stop for an evening of fun.

ILLUSIONS EDMONTON

October 9
Swap Meet
It's time to bring in those clothes that don't fit or suit you. Everyone else will be doing the same. With a little bit of luck, someone will bring in something you like. If not, remember Halloween is coming.

November 9
Especially For You
We are having someone from a specialty store come in and talk to us about the different types of breast forms and how to find the best fit for you.

December
Stayed tuned for details on our fabulous Christmas Party!

For dates of upcoming Edmonton Socials or for more information, call Roxanne or Rachael at (403) 486-9661 or (403) 488-3234

COMMUNITY BITS AND PIECES

SHOE RAFFLE
Sponsored by Gina, Duchess Exterior

We will need your help in buying and selling tickets, so please offer your help to the sponsors. The proceeds from this raffle will go to the Social committee to help fund future events at the Club Socials!

ARGRA

Ongoing dances throughout the year. We are welcome to come any time. Michelle, Brenda, Monica, Stephanie, Susan and Teri went to the last one after one of the Club Socials and had a fun time.

INTERNATIONAL

September 18-21
Paradise in the Poconos
PO Box 61263, King of Prussia PA 19406-1263. (610) 640-9449 (crossdresser oriented)

October 1-5
Southern Comfort, Atlanta GA
PO Box 77591, Atlanta, GA 30357

October 16-19
Rainbow Spirit convergence
Dixon Mountain, NC
(704) 253-9882
(open to all TG-identified people)

October 19-26
Fantasia Fair, Provincetown MA
PO Box 2734, Boston, MA 022208
(404) 633-6470
sscatl@aol.com

October 30 - November 1
Fall Harvest
P.O. Box 3112, Omaha, NE 68103
(open to all TG-identified people)

November 12-16
Holiday En Femme
Cherry Hill, NJ
1092 St. Georges Ave., #234
Rahway, NJ 07065
908-826-5287

1998
January 16-19
Dignity Cruise #9
Roundtrip from Miami to the private island, CoCoCay and Nassau, Bahamas
Cruises Inc.
Brenda Cyrus
1-800-247-7021

January 22-25
TCNE First Event
P.O. Box 2283
Woburn, MA 01888

February 26 - March 2
Texas "T" Party
San Antonio, TX
P.O. Box 17
Bulverde, TX 78163

March 25-29

12th Annual IFGE Convention
Toronto, Ontario
IFGE
P.O. Box 229
Waltham, MA 02254
617-899-2212
IFGE@World.STD.Com
(open to all TG - identified people)

November 12-16

Joint Meeting, The Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality and American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors, and Sex Therapists, Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, Arlington, VA
JointAADECT/SSSS Meeting
P.O. Box 240, Mount Vernon, IA 52314-0240
(319) 895-6407
(319) 895-6203 fax

DIRECTORY

Illusions Social Club
6802 Ogden Rd. SE
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Illusion Social Club
Box 33002, Glenwood PO
Edmonton T5P 4V8
(403) 486-9661 or 488-3234
Roxanne or Rachel

Victoria Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgendered Pride Society
PO Box 8016, Station Central,
Victoria, BC V8W 3R7
Tel (250) 995-2992 (24 hr. msg line) e-mail robbs@uvic.ca

Xpressions

PO Box 223, Station A
Toronto, ON M5W 1B2
The club provides events and outings to enhance the transgender experience and the ultimate goal of being comfortable dressed in public.

East Kootenay Gay and Lesbian Organization (EKGLO)

To provide a safe and supportive environment for les/bi/gay, and transgendered persons and their friends and family.
Box 21023 Cranbrook Mall Postal Outlet, Cranbrook, BC, V1C 6K5
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If you are in the Calgary area, visit us at the shop of Lingerie by Barbie - B&B Leatherworks at the address below:

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If you are from out of town, write us and tell us about yourself. Send a photo if you want to be in the *Illusions* registry. Include a cheque or money order in Canadian Funds.

Get your events listed
Illusion Magazine
(403) 236-7072 or
fax (403) 275-6443

This area has been left intentionally blank due to privacy considerations.

**L - R 2nd Princess Christina,
Empress VII Rachel,
and 1st Princess Dana**

Empress Rachel Carmina

I perhaps should have calmed down by now, but I'm still in shock that I am the newest Empress of Illusions. It's been six weeks since that night and it still feels like yesterday. So many things have happened to and around me since that night, many good and some sad, but life goes on.

Since I joined Illusions way back in October of 94, I have seen this club and many of its members expand beyond the confines of the four walls that brought us comfort and made our second home. I am positive that this is a natural and inevitable result of many factors. Our regular socials gave us a chance to talk amongst ourselves and share the thoughts and aspirations of our femme selves. We found that many of us wanted and even needed to be able to express their feminine side out in public.

Stated another way, we wanted acceptance from society at large. From many small steps into the alternate lifestyle world and the world at large, we have gathered the courage and learned what we needed to learn from each other. We also learned from what members wrote in issues of the magazine. Many of us now go out whenever or wherever we want to. That is not to say that we still don't occasionally get a small case of butterflies in the stomach when we take that first step into the mall. We have learned to leave that fear in the closet.

We truly are living in a fortunate time. Society has been made more aware of our existence through the media, be it talk shows or movies or other venues. However, we are still not an everyday sight in public. The average person still isn't sure what to make of us. During the course of my reign, providing there is enough interest, I would like us to have more semi-public or public outings, be they going out as a group for dinner, to a store for a "ladies night" of shopping or out to the movies or the theatre. I know that we have done some of these things in Edmonton during the past year and they have been well received by the girls wherever we went. In addition, we actually encountered no problems wherever we went.

While I'd like us to be out in semi-public situations more often, I don't want us to abandon our regular socials. We have to remember that

these socials were crucial for many of us longer term members that are now the most out in public. I would like us to continue to have those socials that help us learn how to look our best, be it wig care or make up application or some other topic. At the same time, we also need to continue having socials that are just for fun, be it "The Girls of Summer", "Winterfest", the Coronation Balls in Edmonton and Calgary, Casino night at the club or some other theme night to name just a few. There are always the new "girls" that are just coming to terms with their femme selves. They are still taking those small steps that so many of us have already taken. They need to see that it is possible and not just a dream. I think that this is why you still have the past Empresses continuing to support the club by showing up at most of our socials.

In closing, I want to promise to everyone that I will do my best to make Illusions' Social Club the best that it can be. To that end I need your input. Tell me what you feel we need or what you would like to see happen. If you have any suggestions or ideas to make our club better, talk to me, I would love to talk to you about them. If I'm not around, talk to our First Princess Dana or one of our past Empresses and they will be happy to pass on your words to me. If any of you prefer to talk to me directly, ask for my phone number and I or any of the girls who know me, will gladly pass on my number. While I may have my ideas, your thoughts and opinions are even more important to me.

1st Princess VII Dana

Hi girls!! Welcome to the premier report from Princess Dana.

First off --- congratulations to Empress Rachael and Princess Christina. It was great campaigning with such great sisters.

I have had a busy time already, starting with representing Illusions, along with Empress Rachael and several of the Edmonton girls at the Edmonton Court Ball. We showed them how its done, still going strong at 6 a.m. The club hospitality suite was a hit and received many favorable comments.

The next day a group attended the Fringe Festival catching Tornado Magnet with Gloria Hole (aka Darrin Hagan). It was a super show. If at all possible catch the Fringe --the entertainment is indescribable.

I also was able to spend a day at the Great Alberta Campout. This is a great opportunity to spend a weekend camping in a secure and safe area. Girls of Summer is next and I am looking forward to more fun and frolic with the girls.

2nd Princess VII Christina

What a difference a year can make!

When I joined Illusions a year ago on September 14, 1996, I was on the verge of a crisis. My wife had caught me crossdressing, and as usual, I tried to lie my way out of an extremely embarrassing situation. Of course, it didn't work, and I had to make a decision: to accept my crossdressing or to continue in a state of denial, fear and unhappiness. It was terrifying, because I was afraid of my *femme* personality, but I also hated how denial was shaping my personality. To remain in the closet meant more lies, deceit, and dishonesty. My situa-

tion was all the more galling since I had actually divulged my "little secret" to my wife before we were married...and then promptly declared that I was "cured". It would have been easier to raise the dead.

So I did the right thing -- the thing I should have done nearly six years ago when I first learned about Illusions: I joined. It was one of the best decisions of my life, almost like being reborn. I guess you could call me a Born-Again Crossdresser. To be sure, the road has not been entirely smooth or straightforward, but over-all, accepting my transgendered nature has made me a happier and better person. I have been very pleased to meet Christina, whom I have ignored and repressed for most of my life. At Illusions, I found the facilities, resources, and people that have helped to make my experience a positive one. And fortunately, I have been blessed with a wife who has been very supportive of my decision.

Still, its difficult to believe that I am 2nd Princess VII and "Ambassador in Perpetuity" for Illusions (a title which our Empress Rachel kindly bestowed upon me at my last social on July 25). This journey has been nothing if not interesting and always surprising. And the journey continues, literally and figuratively, which is what I have chosen to write about.

As I promised during the election campaign for Empress VII, I have moved to the United States. I now reside in East Providence, Rhode Island, where my family and I are setting up a new home while I pursue my doctorate in history at Brown University over the next four to five years. Of course, I am excited by this opportunity, but I am

also very sorry to leave my Illusions friends. I miss you all. Still, with any luck, I will find the means to visit before the next Birthday Party! In the meantime, I wish the best to everyone, especially to our new royalty (Empress VII Rachel and 1st Princess Dana), to my Illusions sister Teresa who has agreed to fill in for me during my absence, to Lisa and the Illusions social committee, and of course, to Barbie and Christine.

Among other things, I plan to keep in touch with the club through my articles, by making contacts with our sister organizations down here, by writing about the transgendered community and issues on the east coast of the USA. And, of course, I am more than happy to play hostess to any Illusions member who happens to find her way down to New England. Although I will be very busy once school starts, I also plan to visit Provincetown (near Cape Cod in Massachusetts, and only a couple of hours by car from Rhode Island) for the Fantasia Fair on October 19-26. Its a week of celebrating transgenderism, in a town that welcomes our community. I understand that a busload of Canadian girls are coming down from Ontario, and perhaps elsewhere...so maybe I will see you there. If not, I promise to give you a full report in the next issue of *Illusion*!

In the meantime, here are a few tentative observations on the transgendered scene here in Rhode Island. The first thing that struck me is the difficulty I had with getting connected. There seems to be nothing that approaches the level of organization that we enjoy in Calgary. Nor even of next-door Massachusetts, which has a very active scene in Boston, and several support groups and resources

ROYAL CHAT THRONE SPEECH

throughout the state. In learning this, I have re-discovered the value of the Illusions Social Club. It is a precious resource that we should not take for granted. Nevertheless, I persevered and found a group, which is only about a year old. It is called Morf? and the peculiar name of this group is derived from the internet slang used to ask if someone is male or female (ie. "are you m or f?"). It also suggests the idea of a "metamorphosis." Although Morf? is small and has few resources, its members are a lovely and supportive group of people. It publishes a newsletter and meets on the second Wednesday of each month in a home in the town of Warren (Rhode Island is very tiny, with a total state population of less than one million, and everything is within easy driving distance).

I was interested to learn that transsexuals are the core of Morf? and that they easily outnumber the crossdressing membership. I was told that most crossdressers in Rhode Island are still very much in the closet. If the CDers go out, they prefer to travel out-of-state to places like Boston. This seems to be confirmed by my own initial forays into the club scene. Even at TG-friendly clubs, like Gerardos in Providence, the transgendered clientele are primarily transsexuals, despite the fact that there is no cover charge for drag queens on Friday nights (at Gerardos everyone who is not TS, is considered to be a drag queen). So transsexuals constitute the leadership in a group like Morf?, since, as my TS friend Patricia pointed out, most transsexuals do not – indeed cannot – remain in the closet. As for myself, although I intend to visit Boston at some point, I prefer to stake out my own turf closer to home. And so far, I have not encountered

many difficulties. In addition to the clubs, I have visited local coffee shops and restaurants and I have not experienced any significant harassment. At worst, my presence caused some stares and excited whispers when my brother-in-law and I visited an all-night diner after a late night of clubbing.

I will soon learn what the scene is like on campus. I have discovered that Brown University has a very strict policy against discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation. The assistant dean of the graduate school made this quite clear at a meeting of international graduate students when she stated that, at Brown, "its okay to be gay, lesbian, and bisexual." Although she didn't mention any policy on transgenderism, I was pleased and surprised to see that transgendered issues are addressed by the campus womens centre and the health services department. There is also there is a registered Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Student Alliance (GLBTA). I don't know much about this group yet, since it shuts down during the summer hiatus. But I am eager to find out, since my own coming out eventually has to include my academic life. So far, I am out to my family and friends, and to my neighbours in Calgary, but I don't intend to stop there. My own personal comfort level dictates that I no longer wish to spend my life with one foot in the closet, and here in Rhode Island – of all places – it seems I have been presented with a path to coming out in my professional life. So we shall see.

I have probably rambled on for too long – but if any of you are still reading, I would like to close with some thoughts about my recent experiences with coming out. I am determined to be out, but I have

not been rash, particularly since being out also affects my wife and children. So I started with people who were close to me, and I learned that I have a caring family and faithful friends. But nevertheless, every case involved a leap of faith. I was never certain what the reaction would be. It has varied from more-or-less complete acceptance and support, to those who are tolerant but don't want to know much more. I am also very thankful for the careful and thoughtful advice I constantly received from my Illusions friends.

At the same time, I want to emphasize that this has been my choice. Coming out is not for everyone, and I am alert to this reality. The real point is to find that space in your life where you can feel comfortable with your TG lifestyle. Not everyone is blessed with a supportive and loving family, nor do they work and live in an environment where it is possible to be open. So this is my story, for what its worth. And if it helps another sister, then that's for the good.

As some of you know, my last weekend in Calgary coincided with my 20-year high school reunion – for better or worse, I am a Lord Beaverbrook graduate. Although I jokingly told people that I planned to attend in drag and then skip town the next day, I had more serious purposes in mind. At a very personal level, this involved achieving a sense of closure with my past, especially with those teenage years when I had no way of understanding my urge to crossdress. It was not my intention to flaunt myself now, but to demonstrate my new-found pride in my gender-identity. But there was another purpose as well, which was to educate a large group of people about transgenderism and to assert my right to be in the mainstream of society.

ROYAL CHAT THRONE SPEECH

From both angles, I believe the reunion was a great success. There were several hundred people in attendance, and I have to admit that I was initially terrified. But my closest friends were terrific. They barely blinked an eye-lid, and I eventually felt comfortable and relaxed.

But what a mountain of questions and misperceptions! At first, most people treated me as an oddity, or as a joke, or spread rumours which swirled all around my ears. As an example, the keynote speaker at the dinner joked that many of us had changed quite a bit in 20 years, even to the point of having a sex-change operation. It was the only time I felt angry that weekend – he hadn't ever spoken to me (he avoided me the whole weekend and never bothered to find out the facts), and there he was on a stage, pontificating and demonstrating his ignorance and disrespect by making ill-informed assumptions! But then I reminded myself that he was simply reflecting the common assumptions of a society that is largely misinformed about transgenderism – as even I was, not so long ago.

By and large, most people were very tolerant and extremely curious, and they wanted to know more. So I spent the weekend explaining – as best as I could – what transgenderism is, in all its wonderful variety and diversity: that we are crossdressers, transsexuals, and drag queens, that we are gay, straight and bisexual, that we are thinking, feeling, loving human beings who want to live our lives without fear. I also promoted Illusions, just in case there were any closeted TGs at the reunion who might want to join a group like ours. I talked, and talked, and talked some more, until I very nearly lost my voice. Most people were rather shocked to discover

that I was still biologically male, that I am happily married, and that I have two children. There may have been some who were offended by my presence, but no one – absolutely no one – had an unpleasant word to say to my face. Quite the opposite, in fact. There seemed to be a very supportive consensus by the end. And to me, it drove home the point that, if society is going to become more tolerant of transgendered people, we have to be seen and heard.

Well, at least that is what I tried to do, and I hope I had a little success. Whatever the shortcomings of my effort, I feel very good that I went. There are two people who were crucial in helping me decide to attend my high school reunion, and I want to acknowledge and thank them. The first is our very own Illusions member, Sonya, who had her own high school reunion, not so long ago when she was coming out as a TS. Sonya gave freely of her time, on several occasions, to discuss her experience and give me some good advice on how to handle the experience. Her courage inspired me. Secondly, my best friend from high school, Derrick, encouraged me and watched my back the whole weekend. Derrick was one of the very first people I came out to, and when I told him my intentions he was as solid as rock. Thank you both!

What a difference a year can make!

Girl up North....cont from page 14

Later on, a few of us wandered off to the dance taking place Saturday night. It turned out to be a wild time yet again. That night, I learned of the infamous Rachel shuffle. If you're curious about what that is, you'll have to ask me in person for the details. During the evening I was asked by the ISCCA to serve the shooters. I agreed without realizing that I would also end up having to make them as well! Talk about a hectic hour. I finally had to stop to catch my breath and prepare for my number. I don't think I've ever had such a large (and enthusiastic) crowd for one of my performances. After the party started to wind down, we went back to our campsite and shooter bar. We then continued to party until 4 in the morning with lots of people joining us. Some even continued to party after we had shut things down.

Well, I have to go and get my new outfit for the Coronation Ball XXII in Edmonton. This promises to be another great weekend. I'll tell you all about it next time.

Ta! Ta! for now.

*Empress V.I.J.
Rachel C.*

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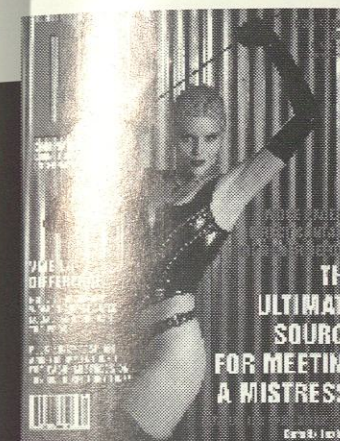
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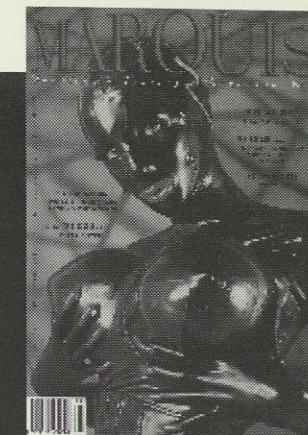
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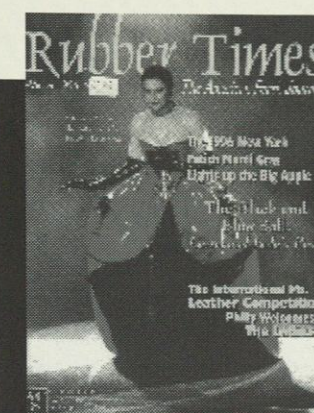
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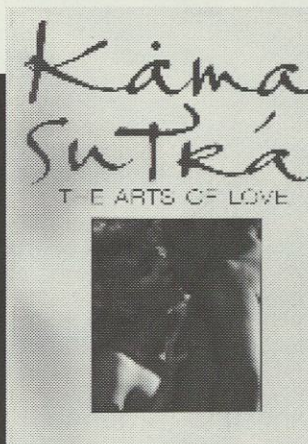
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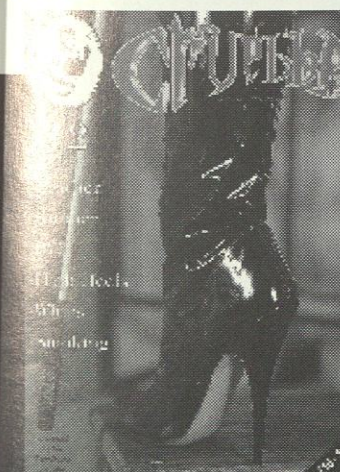
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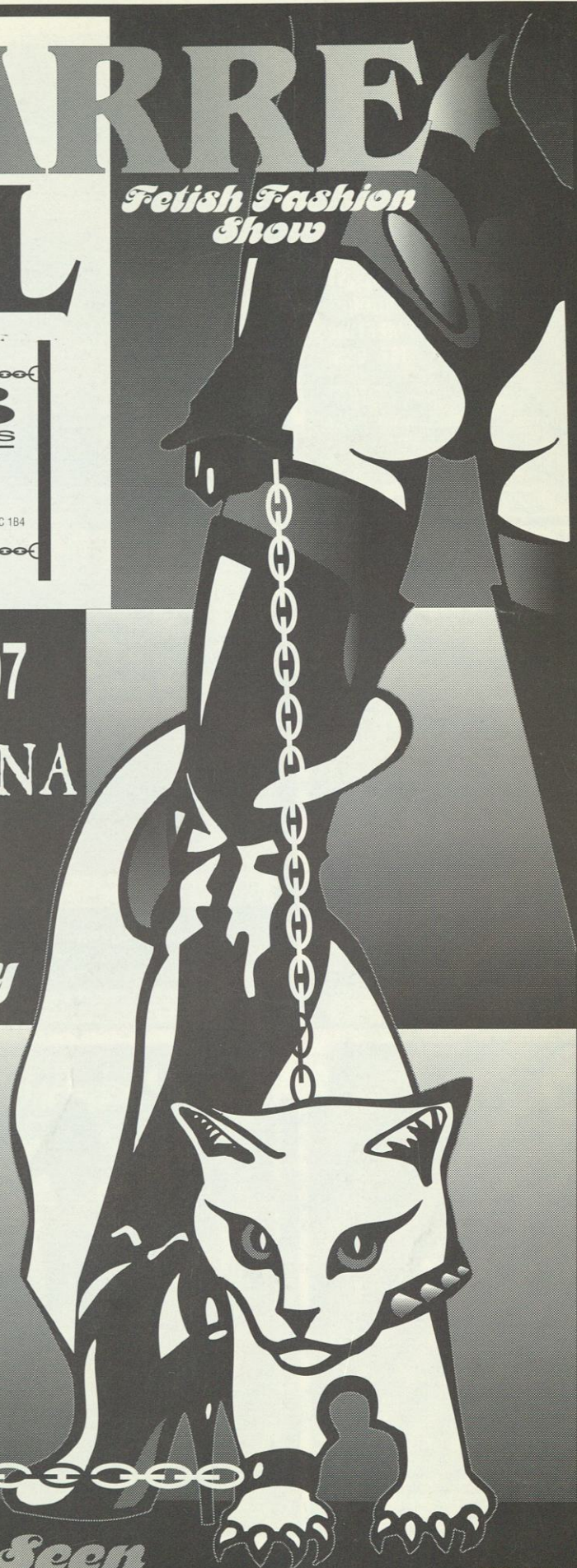
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